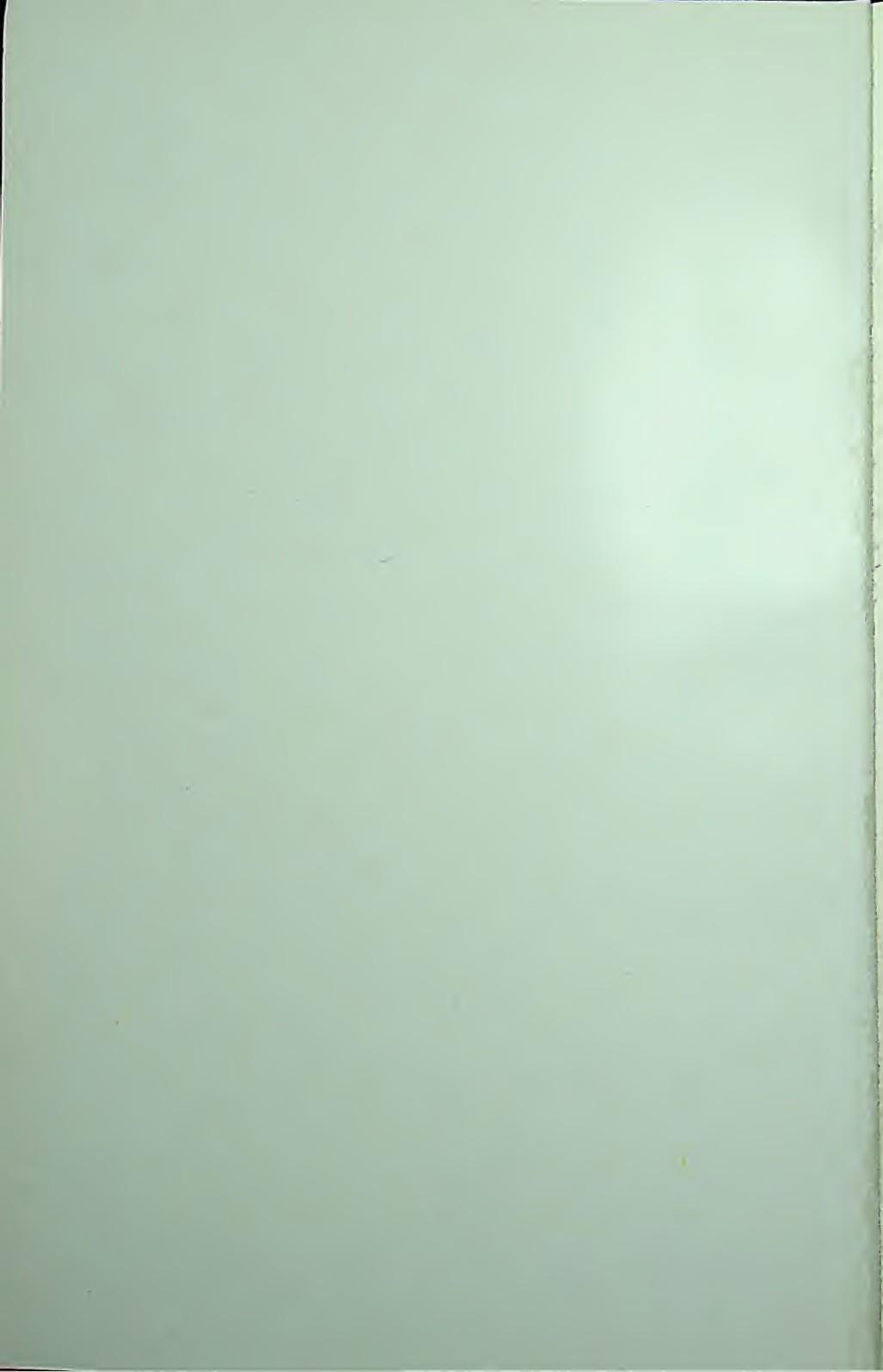


# History of Tibet

S.P. GUPTA  
K.S. RAMACHANDRAN







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शारदा पुस्तकालय  
(सर्वोच्च श. द. केंद्र)  
छांडे २५४...॥

S.P. GUPTA  
K.S. RAMACHANDRAN

TIBETAN PARLIAMENTARY  
AND POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

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## Foreword

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The *History of Tibet* is the second of several publications planned for educating the Tibetan community in exile. The first in the series was *The Democratic Vision*. Through this brief account of their history, we wish to highlight the achievements of Tibetans in the past and present—an account which may provide them the insight to understand their strength and weaknesses. This may help them in formulating their future on surer grounds.

Tibet, as is well known, is still a great resource for the Buddhists throughout the world and a living heritage of India's great gifts to mankind. Tibet, in fact, has been a most trusted trustee of this heritage. But for Tibetan translations of many early original ancient Indian texts on Buddhism, no other source existed to throw light on several vital aspects of Indian culture.

Tibet of the past has often been described in the Western media as 'feudal' but it is absolutely inapt and also misleading since this perception is based exclusively on the Marxist interpretation of the society in Europe of the Middle Ages. Tibetan society was neither as rigid as the medieval European society nor was it based upon the system of holding land by giving one's services to the owner which alone explains feudalism. Mobility was not restricted to permanent upper strata of the society. There were no official or social or land-holding classes, or even hereditary 'castes' in Tibet. There was, however, an aristocracy. But this, too, was service-oriented and consisted of both lay and monastic officials. There was the underpinning of Buddhist ideal of renunciation and service in the life of those who usually constituted the aristocracy, particularly from the clergy side.

Tibet was fully self-governing, economically self-sufficient and culturally thriving *sans* any significant social contradictions. The Government of Tibet maintained postal services, an army, a currency and an organised legal system. It also collected taxes in a regulated and systematic manner.

There was an educational system best suited to the times. It was from the primary level to the highest philosophical

studies. Throughout Tibet there existed, like the Indian Ayurvedic system, a medical system which had developed slowly and gradually from the 7th century. This medical and health care system continues to thrive in Tibet and outside as well.

Tibet had a National Assembly called 'Tsongdu' which, although not a modern Western style parliament, had amongst its members senior government officials, semi-government officials, monastic and religious representatives and leaders of various trade associations. To-day, Tibetans in exile have concretised their democratic vision into an Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, a truly representative body of the entire Tibetan Diaspora, nay, of their aspiration as well.

Tibet had independent and direct relations with India, Nepal, Mongolia, Bhutan and China. Though on a limited scale, it was nevertheless multidimensional—political, commercial, cultural and spiritual.

Only a people like Tibetans with their glorious history, independent political entity, enjoying complete sovereignty, could reflect a positive political image which draws recognition from the people in many countries even if their governments feel inhibited in backing their 'expression' and 'resolutions' with firm action.

The Centre acknowledges with gratitude the contribution of Mr. Tenzin Namgyal Tethong, Chief Kalon, H.H. the Dalai Lama's Government in exile for preparing the framework of this book; Dr. S.P. Gupta and Mr K.S. Ramachandran for writing the text and preparing the illustrations; Dr. Dawa Norbu, Associate Professor, Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Prof. S. Rinpoche, Director and Sarva Shri Jampa Samten and Nawang Samten of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi for going through the manuscript critically and offering useful suggestions. It also places on record the services rendered by the colleagues in the office from time to time. We gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of Tibetan Children's Village, Dharmashala, for the illustrations we have used after the drawings published in their book *A History of Tibet*, Book 1, authored by Christopher Gibb.

## Preface

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Tibet has been almost inaccessible to the outside world from ancient times mainly because of its high mountain ranges and extreme climatic conditions, generally very cold and dry. This brought about an effective barrier for many marauding hordes. For the Hindus, on the other hand, Tibet was the Holy Land where Lord Shiva was residing with Devi Parvati on Mount Kailas. The waters of the twin lakes of Manasarovar was, however, sacred to all the people in India. Most of the major holy rivers of northern India, emerged from these natural sources in Tibet.

Tibet has always had a very strong sense of nationalism or oneness of the people. The concept of Tibetan nationalism was, however, not the same as the one the Europeans evolved after Napoleon, which was exclusively political and governmental; Tibetan nationalism has always been a geo-cultural concept. Deeply rooted in its history, its literature, and, above all, its religion - first Bon (Pön) and then Buddhism - Tibet did not look outside the country to learn lessons in nationalism.

The geography and history created the feeling of oneness amongst different groups of people who inhabited an extremely diversified landscape - the high mountains of the west, the deep river-valleys of the south, and the natural passes in the hills of the north and the east. The people of different regions spoke different dialects even though the language was one. They took different kinds of food and drinks too. They tilled their land differently and they sowed seeds of a variety of cereals. They had many principalities and many local rulers. The thread of unity in this apparent diversity was, however, very

strong because it was created not by any sense of personal political aggrandisement but through a very long process of evolution.

Through this book we hope to introduce in short the history of Tibet to the new generation of the Tibetans as well as outsiders to show quite clearly that the present cannot be imposed on the past; whatever may be the condition of the people in exile at the moment, in the past Tibet was indeed a great nation, politically and culturally, and in future too, it can regain its pristine glory.

A new Tibet is indeed emerging. Strong foundations of democracy are being laid. Tibetans have now spread all over the world and many of them are in the forefront of researches in science and technology. Strong nationalist feelings are kindling the imagination of the new generation. These are indeed the most healthy signs.

## *Introduction*

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Tibet was *terra incognita*, i.e., The Unknown Land, to the western world for a very long time. References to this country by the westerners have been meagre. Herodotus mentions 'gold digging ants in the north' but does not know of the country. Pliny, Alexander and others were not even aware of this region. Strangely, Ptolemy, who knew the sources of the rivers of the Punjab, never had an inkling of Tibet or its rivers. It is the Arabs, from the middle of 9th century, viz. Suleiman, Ibn Khordahbeh, Al Ya Kubai, who became aware of this country, because by that time they had come to India and Central Asia. Masudi and Edrisi knew Lake Manasarovar as the source of Punjab rivers. The author of *Ain-i-Akbari* was, however, ignorant of Tibet. The immediate neighbours, the Indians and the Chinese, knew about this country for ages.

The population of Tibet is generally Mongoloid. It consists of a people tall, long limbed and aquiline features and long head in the Dotod (Kham) and Domed (Amdo) regions. The other, short people, with high cheek bones, flat nose and round headed population, are in the Ü-Tsang region.

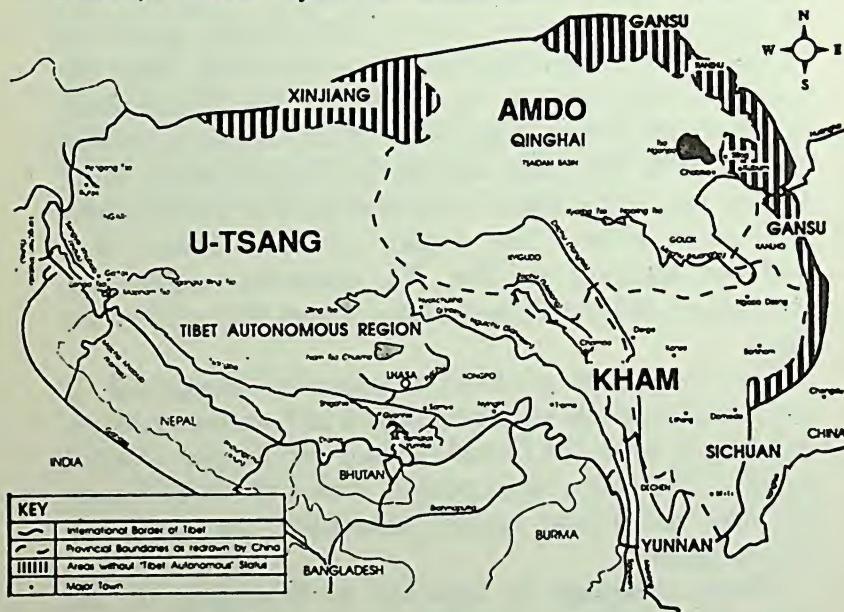
Tibetan language is classified as belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group by Western linguists. It may be noted that the Tibetan language has absolutely no resemblance to Chinese. As is usual, there are many dialects in Tibet but the one prevalent in Ü-Tsang seems to be widely understood.

The current forms of the Tibetan written characters have been developed in the 7th century on the basis of

Gupta Brahmi script prevalent in India.

The Tibetan calendar follows a lunar year of twelve months, each month comprising thirty days. To adjust this with the solar year of 365, 1/4 days, an intercalary or extra month is observed once in three years. The Tibetan New Year begins with the first day of the month Magha in winter.

In Sanskrit Tibet is referred to as 'Bhoṭa' and the Tibetan language as Bhoṭia. The modern name of Tibet, however, seems to be derived from the Mongolian *Thubet*, Chinese *Tufan*, Thai *Thibet* and Arabic *Thubbat*.



Three Provinces of Tibet

## Geography

Tibet is bounded on the south by the Himalayas, and on the west by the Ladakh mountains and the Karakoram ranges. On the north is the Kuen-Lun and the Tang-La ranges consisting of Astin Tagh (Inner) and Altin Tagh (outer), while its eastern spur skirts the Koko Nor (Blue Lake). Only on the east is a gap through which rivers flow. On the north-west is the Xinjiang (Sinkiang) province of China, generally known as Eastern Turkestan of the region called 'Inner Asia' with huge Taklamakan deserts and Tarim river.

The lofty uplands of the snow clad mountains are the source of some of the most famous and greatest rivers of Asia. From near the Mount Kailas the Sengye Khabab (out of Lion's Mouth) originates the Indus. From the Lake Manasarovar flows out the Langehen Khabab (out of Elephant's Mouth), better known in India as Satluj. About 128 km south-west of the Indus originates the Tachok Khabab (out of Horse's Mouth) or the Brahmaputra. In the north-east of Tibet, the Yangtse, flowing through Kham, becomes China's Yangtze river. The Ngomchu and the Zachu rivers from the north, running through Tibet, merge together to flow into Laos and Thailand as Mekong. From the central Tibet originates the Salween and flows through Myanmar or Burma. Another important river of China, the Machu river, rising in the eastern part, becomes the Huang Ho or the Yellow River.

Notable lakes in Tibet are the Tso Mapham (Manasarovar) in the west, Namtso Chukmo (Tengri Nor) in the north-west; Yardok Yutso (Yamdok)

central Tibet; and Tso Trishr Gyalmo (Koko Nor) in the north-east.

Tibet is divided into three main geographical zones, viz. Ü-Tsang, Dotod (Kham) and Domed (Amdo); each one exhibiting its own climate, ecology, agricultural and horticultural produce.



Natural Surroundings of Tibet

Tibet covers an area of about 2.5 million sq. km., indeed a very vast land, but 75% of this is largely uninhabited because of extreme climate. It is located between 28 and 38 degrees North parallels and 78 and 103 East Meridian.

Tibet is appropriately called the 'Roof of the World' since it is the highest and the broadest plateau in the world, ranging between 16000 and 11000 ft. in height. A substantial area of this in the north-west is in fact the

'land of snows', with mountain-tops covered for most part of the year by a thick mantle of snow, with lowest temperature touching  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  in winter. The mid-day is generally very hot, touching  $38^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The rainfall is very scarce; in central Tibet it ranges only between 25 to 50 cm. a year.



Tibet and the Neighbouring Countries

The grassland zone extends upto 4500 to 5000 m. contour. Between 3700 m. and 4000 m. birches, rhododendrons and other deciduous trees are found. Between 3100 m. and 2500 m. maple, oak, birch, and several other kinds of trees abound.

Tibet has around 2,28,000 hectares of farmland with crops like highland barley, wheat, rapeseed, broad beans, corn, rice, etc. It has also 13.3 million hectares of pastureland with 21 million yak, cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules and other animals.

Tibet is rich in metals and minerals like gold, iron, copper, coal, tungsten, uranium, manganese, tin, etc. which can make the country extremely rich if properly exploited.

On the north and east of Tibet is China and south and west are India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.

## *Early History*

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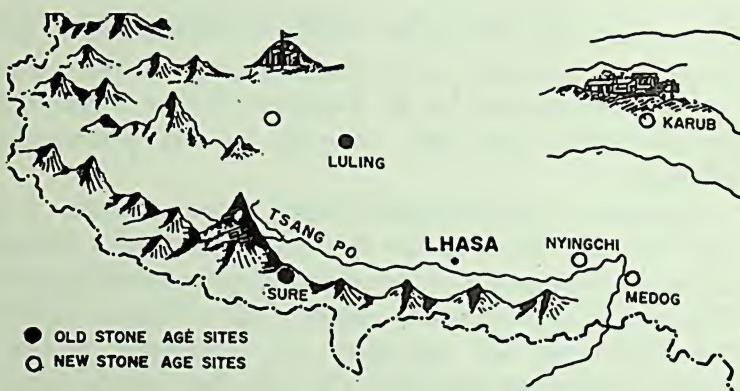
**A**ccording to the Indian Acharya Prajnavarma, one Rupati, a commander of the Kaurava army in India, after having been defeated by the Pandavas, fled to Tibet with his followers, and their progeny is the present-day Tibetans.

However, a mythological origin is also current. It is said that the Tibetans are the descendants of a simian father, an incarnation of the compassionate Avalokitesvara (Chenresi) and a mountain ogress. The children of these two inherited the qualities of both—the father's compassionate and merciful, though often playful traits, and the mother's stubborn characteristics.

Tradition and mythology apart, it has now been fully established on recent archaeological findings that the Tibetans were autochthonous and that they did not come from outside the country.

The earliest evidence of this comes in the form of Old Stone Age or Palaeolithic tools. These are roughly chipped tools made on river-borne pebbles and are called 'choppers', datable to a period between 1,00,000 and 50,000 years from now. At a later period, called Neolithic or New Stone Age, people started using polished stone tools and earthen pots and pans, and living in caves and tents. Some of these important archaeological sites are Sure in southern Tibet and Lu ling in central Tibet. At Karub, near the town Chamdo in eastern Tibet, the remains of a whole Neolithic village, with streets and houses, some 5000 years old, have been found in excavations. Stone ploughs, hoes, axes, millstones as well as earthen pots and pans have been found in individual

houses. Neolithic remains, including chipped tools made on stone flakes and used in hunting, have also been found at some other sites, such as Nyngchi and Medog on the Tsang Po river in eastern Tibet.



Tibet : Prehistoric Sites

Early history of Tibet, like that of any other ancient country of the world, is shrouded in mystery and mythical traditions. It is said that the Purygal dynasty started from a descendant of a king exiled from Magadha, India, and was elected as the ruler of the Yarlung in 127 B.C. and named Nyatri Tsampo. He constructed the first fort in Tibet at Yumbu which is known as Yumbu Lagar.

Until the eighth King, Drigum Tsampo, the dynasty ruled the Yarlung area smoothly. Drigum Tsampo had, however, to face at one time the revolt of orthodox Bon followers and he lost the power for more than a decade to Longam who simultaneously exiled his two sons to Kongpo. Later his younger son Jatri Tsampo, also known as Pude Gungyal, regained the power and constructed his father's tomb which was the first tomb of a king in

Yarlung. It is said that during this period iron and copper were discovered and metal-based technology developed. He dug irrigation canals, built bridges, and erected a palace called 'Chingwar Taktse' at Chongyas. He was a great ruler with clear vision of the future.

Eighteen rulers succeeded Jatri Tsampo. The twenty-eighth king, Tho-Tho-ri Nyansten, was born in A.D. 173. During his sixtieth birth-day a book of Buddhist scripture came to him from India which was in Sanskrit. It was greatly revered.

To the thirty-second ruler, Namri Songtsan, a son was born in A.D. 617. He was named Tri Songtsen, better known in later days as Songtsen Gampo. To the neighbouring Chinese he was Chi-tsung-lung-tsan. He did many things for the welfare of the people.

## *The Classical Age*

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Tibet enters into her Classical Age during the 7th Century from the period of Songtsen Gampo. Songtsen Gampo became king in his thirteenth year and ruled Tibet from 629 till his death in 650.

Songtsen Gampo was the greatest among the Tibetan kings. He was a great conqueror, able administrator and also reformer of the highest order. Songtsen set down the ten moral principles and sixteen rules for the conduct of the people. He sent to India his minister Thon-mi Sam-bhota alongwith sixteen people to learn Sanskrit. Unfortunately, only Sam-bhota returned alive to Tibet but with his knowledge of Gupta Brahmi script, he designed a script for the Tibetan language.

Soon after Songtsen became king, he married Bhrikuti, the daughter of Amsuvarman, the Nepalese ruler. Songtsen also married a Chinese princess. For this he had to defeat his rival suitor, Thokiki, the eastern Tartar ruler. The refusal of the Chinese emperor Tai-tsung to give his daughter Wen-Cheng Kung-chu in marriage resulted in the defeat of the Chinese in an armed conflict and the emperor was forced to concede the request of Songtsen Gampo.

During his reign, Songtsen Gampo put down the strong-willed tribes like Chiang, Pai-lan and Tang-hsiang. He also took the city of Sunglchou. Tibetans captured portions of Burma (Myanmar) and in 640 they occupied Nepal, remaining there for some years. A severe epidemic, however, caused his death in 650. His tomb is in the Chongyas valley, near Yalung.

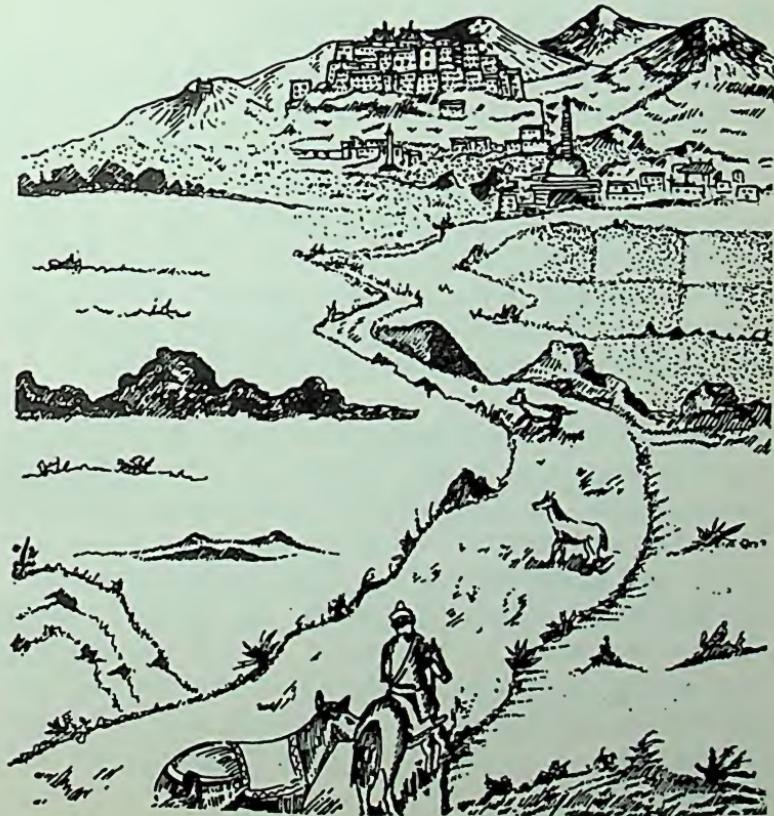
As an administrator Songtsen Gampo was *par excellence*. He divided his kingdom into six districts, each under the charge of a Governor. The Governors allocated lands among their subjects. They also formulated class divisions,

viz. soldiers, farmers, attendants, etc. For every thousand family a headman or spokesman was appointed. The Governors maintained their own soldiers, distinctive flags, uniform, colour of horses, etc.

Songtsen also appointed nine ministers of different ranks to advise him in his administration.

Songtsen Gampo's period is rightly considered as 'Golden Age' in the history of Tibet since it witnessed all round progress in the country — political, cultural and economic.

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Lhasa, the Capital of Tibet

## *Songtsen Gampo's Successors*

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**S**ongtsen Gampo was succeeded by his grandson Mansong Mangtsen whose father, Gungru Gungtsan, the only son of Songtsen Gampo, died prior to 650. Gar Tongtsen assisted the minor king till he attained the age. Thereafter Gar Tongtsen lived for eight years in Thu-yu-hun, carrying on fighting, and forced the prince Mu-yung No-ho-po to flee to China.

### **The Achievements of the 7th Century**

In the year 667 Gar Tongtsen died and his first son Gar Tsenya Dorbu assumed the office of the Prime Ministership. His three brothers, Gar Triding Tsendro, Gar Zindoye and Gar Tsenyen Sungton, became military commanders. This great Gar family played a very important role in building the Tibetan empire in the 7th century. In the year 668, for example, a fort was constructed at Dremakhol and in the succeeding year the ruler of T'u-yu-hun took oath of loyalty to Tibet.

*Tibetan Victory over Chinese Inner Asia:* The year 670 is a memorable year in the history of Tibet when the Tibetans raided the Tarim Basin in Taklamakan Desert of Inner Asia and captured four garrisons at Ansi which was under the Chinese domination. The Chinese commander, Hsueh Jen-kuei, sent to retake them, was so badly routed that on his return to the capital he was immediately demoted by the emperor. Chiang K'o, who was also sent for the same purpose in 671, died on the way. Thus, the Tibetan flag of victory flew atop in Inner Asia for decades.

The Tibetan minister Jang-jig, who knew written and spoken Chinese, went to the Chinese court as an envoy and explained to the emperor that the Tibetan king excelled his grandfather Songtsen Gampo in every department of state affairs. He also made clear that the Tibetans are united and take action only after long deliberations. The strength of Tibetan nationalism lied deep in the qualities and character of the Tibetan people.

*Tibetans Defeat the Chinese:* In 676 Shan-chou and K'uo chou, located in the Chinese province of Kansu in mainland China, were raided. Many Chinese were killed and the military officers returned to Tibet with large war-booty. The Chinese emperor thereupon deputed his Prime Minister Liu Jen-kuei and Commander Li-Yu to T'ao-ho and Liang-chou, respectively. But even before the Chinese armies could proceed, the Tibetans ransacked the towns of T'ieh-chou, Mi-kung and Tan-ling in Kansu. The emperor degraded his commanders for this failure. Thereafter, he deputed his political secretary Li-Ching-yuan with the rank of General with reinforcements from Chiennan and Shannan provinces to counter the Tibetans. The Tibetans were routed at Longji and with new reinforcement Li attacked Koko Nor region also. Linu Shen-li, a commander of Li Ching-yuan, penetrated Tibet but was surrounded and killed and the Chinese were forced to retreat. On his return, the Chinese general was publicly denounced, humiliated and demoted. Such was the military power of the Tibetans, the Chinese were simply no match to them.

In 676 Mansong Mangtsen died but it was kept secret for three years. He was succeeded by his son Dusong Mangje.

In 677 the revolt by Shangshung was quelled. The Tibetan warriors and generals were of outstanding abilities, and were recognized by their neighbours for their valour.

The famous generals were Ngok Dongshor, Ngok Lingkham, Non Gyaltse, Bas Gosdongchan, Gos Yakchung, Chokrro Dongshor and Non Tridun Yujin. Gar Triding Tsendro succeeded his brother as Prime Minister in 685. But the fidelity of the Gar family was waning. He committed suicide in 699. The king, while personally leading the army to put down the revolt in Nepal and northern India, died in 704.

### The Great 8th Century

Tride Tsugtsen, also known as Mes-Agtshom, a seven year old boy, succeeded his father. His grandmother, Trimalo, acted as Regent. Three famous temples—Drakmar Dinzang, Chimpu Namral and Drakma Keru—were constructed to the south of Lhasa during his reign. Tsugtsen married a daughter of a Chinese prince, Chin-ch'eng, in 710. It was intended to smoothen relationship between Tibet and China but the attempt unfortunately failed.

In 741 the princess Chin-ch'eng Kung-chu died and the Tibetan king sent an envoy to convey the news to the Chinese emperor and at the same time expressed his desire for negotiation for peace. On the emperor's refusal the king attacked Ch'eng-feng and marched ahead. But his advance was halted by Gen Sheng Hsi Yeh at the Cha'ang-ning bridge. Later the Tibetans captured the town of Shih-p'u and occupied it till 748. In 755 king Mes-Agtshom was killed by his ministers Bal Dongtsep and Langme Zig.

Mes-Agstom's son Trisong Detsen succeeded him the same year. Like his forefathers, he was an ardent Buddhist while his minister Mashang Dompa-Ke and Takra Lugong were Bon religionists and were to some extent against Buddhism. But to the king it hardly mattered.

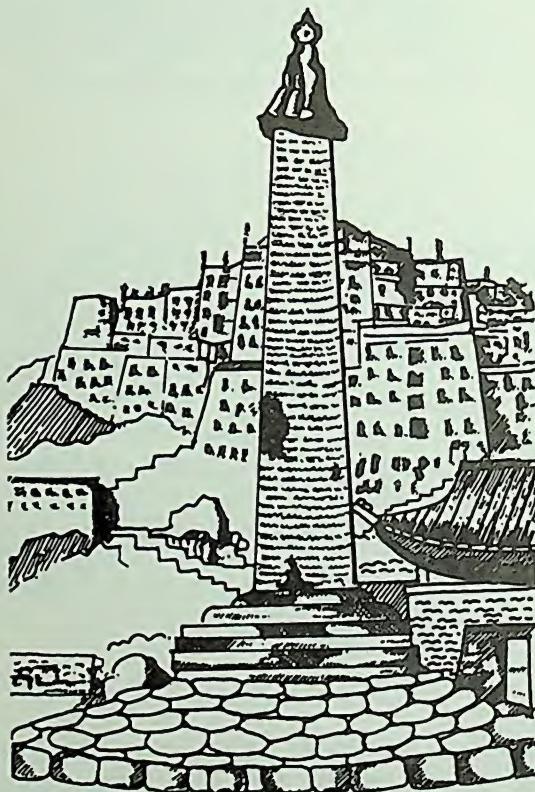
*The Era of Shantarakshita:* The king deputed Ba Salnang to Nepal to request the Indian savant Shantarakshita to come to Tibet to teach Buddhism. Shantarakshita came to Tibet and on his arrival in the Drakmar region the king himself welcomed him. But the scholar, seeing the situation not conducive for preaching Buddhism, returned to Nepal. He advised the king to invite the distinguished *Vajrayana* Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava, then residing in Nepal.



The Ganden Monastery

Shantarakshita, however, came once again to Tibet from Nepal on the request of Trisog Detsen and built a monastery in the Drakmar region similar to the one at Odantapuri in Bihar. It was based on the conception of the Buddhist universe. Twelve years later this monastery came to be known as Migyur Lhungi Dubpai Tsuklakhang "The Temple which is unchangeable, Perfect Mass". However, popularly it was known as Samye. Shantarakshita also trained seven meritorious Tibetans to become the first Tibetan Buddhist monks. This training

became very successful and many more became monks. He also established a centre for the study of Sanskrit language at Samye.



Inscribed stone pillar outside the Potala Palace

Shantarakshita predicted that in Buddhism the Tibetan system of 'Gradual Path' and the Chinese system of 'Instantaneous Enlightenment' would come into conflict. In that eventuality, he asked his disciples to invite Kamalashila to defend the Indian system which the Tibetans followed.

*China was decisively Defeated:* In the year 763 Trisong Detsen sent a large troop under the command of four generals to attack China. They raided Ching-chou whose Governor, Kao-Hui, surrendered unconditionally. Soon Feng-t'en-huen in Pin-chou was also captured. Seeing the humiliating defeat which the Tibetans inflicted on the Chinese, the Chinese emperor sent his minister Kuo Tzuyi to stop the Tibetans but the march was so formidable that it could not be stopped. The emperor had to flee the capital in utter disgrace. Then the Tibetans made Ch'enghung, prince of Kuang-wu, as emperor; thereupon he assumed the new name Ta-she. The Tibetans compelled the enemy to accept their terms and obtained guarantee for prompt payment of annual tribute from the new emperor. Such was the power and strength of the Tibetans. These details are found mentioned in an inscription on the south side of Shol-do-ring in Lhasa.

*The Chinese enter into a Peace Treaty:* For twenty years the Tibetans did not allow the Chinese peaceful nights. In 783, a peace-treaty was eventually signed between the Chinese and the Tibetans, known as the treaty of Chi'ing-shui, demarcating the boundaries between the two countries. All "land in the Koko Nor region, west of T'ao-chou and the Ta-tu river" were ceded to Tibet. The Tibetan political power was undoubtedly in great ascendancy as the Chinese were repeatedly defeated.

Two noted battle-fields of early wars with China in Amdo, one in north of the Yellow river, viz. Gyatrag Thang (Field of the Chinese Blood), and the other Gyadur Thang (Field of Chinese Graves) south of it still survive as monumental testimonies of the supremacy of the Tibetans over the Chinese in the battle-field.

*Military Reorganisation:* Trisong Detsen divided his military command into four regions. Nine brave and strongly built commanders were put in charge of North Zone. Asked by the king if they had enough soldiers they replied that they had and would be able to defend the area by themselves. Hence they were known as Guthup (Capable Nine). They could return back only when the king ordered so, but the order never came and their descendants occupying Chone and Zogye area of Amdo came to be known as Kamalok (not to return without orders).

*Military Alliances & Tibetan Soldiers beyond Tibetan Frontiers:* With great foresight the Tibetans made many military alliances. In the year 750 they made an alliance with the Siamese king Kolofeng. When in 754 Nan-chao was attacked Kolofeng helped and the king bestowed on him the title 'younger brother'. The successor of Kologeng, Imohsun, requested Tibet for assistance in 778 and the Siamese and the Tibetans fought side by side against the Chinese in Szech'uan. Tibetan army remained in Siam for eight years and returned only when peaceful relations were restored between Siam and China.

*Tibetan control over the Pamirs and the Oxus:* Trisong not only recaptured, in the year 790, the four garrisons lost to Chinese earlier but also advanced into the Pamirs and the Oxus basin. A lake in the Oxus valley was named Al Tubbat (Little Tibetan lake). Later, Harun al-Rashid, the Caliph, joined hands with the Chinese to stop the Tibetans but the Tibetans held their position firmly against their combined strength. The Tibetans were also fighting on western side, between the year 785 and 805, with the result that the Chinese border was sadly neglected.

In 797 Trisong Detsen abstained from public life handing over his kingdom to his second son, Muni Tszenpo, the eldest son having died early. The king left the capital and lived at Zungkar where he died a little later. Rightly, the period of Trisong is considered in the history of Tibet as 'most formidable against all enemies'.

*Socio-economic reforms introduced by Muni Tszenpo:* It is not clearly known how long Muni Tszenpo ruled. But he is known to have introduced great social and economic reforms which being a slow process must have taken considerable period of time. To narrow the gap between the rich and the poor he initiated 'land reform' and appointed ministers to oversee the 'equitable distribution of land among the people'. But soon he realized that the rich have a tendency to manipulate things in their favour. Thus, rich had become richer and the poor became poorer. The two subsequent attempts of land reforms also appear to have proved futile for similar reasons. His rule ended abruptly because of the treachery of his mother due to jealousy between herself and queen Phoyongsa, another wife of king Trisong Detsen. His mother poisoned him because he protected Phoyongsa from his mother's attack.

The king died issueless and his younger brother Mutik Tszenpo was disqualified to become the king for his misdemeanour because he killed a minister who had refused him admission to see king Trisong Detsen who was at that point of time in a secret conference. Thus the next brother, Tride Songtsen, became king in 804. He is commonly known as Sadnaleg in Tibetan sources.

*Tibetans Conquer Samarkand:* Sadnaleg's army made history when it fiercely attacked and seized Samarkand

and troubled the Arabs beyond their comprehension. The Caliph's second son, therefore, quickly made peace with the Tibetan Governor of Turkmenistan. It added a glorious chapter to the history of Tibet.

Sadnaleg's successor was one of his younger sons, his third son, Tritsug Detsen, alias Ralpachen, who was enthroned in 815, on the death of his father.

He strengthened the translation work of various treatises from Sanskrit to Tibetan language which was initiated by his forefathers. He was wellknown for his contributions to the process of modernising and standardising the Tibetan language.

*Sino-Tibetan Treaty:* Ralpachen sent his commander Hranje Tsen to Chinese border and threatened the Chinese army with grave consequences. However, with the intervention of Buddhist monks both the sides made peace in 821. The text of the treaty was inscribed on three pillars, one each erected just outside the palace of the emperor of China, at the boundary demarcating the two countries, and at the main gate of Jokhang temple.

*Reforms of Ralpachen:* Ralpachen built a new temple, Onchang Doi Lhakhang, thirty miles to the south-west of Lhasa, on the bank of Kyichu. He also introduced a new system of weights and measures, based on Indian model. He ordered that seven households should be responsible for the maintenance of one Buddhist monk. He tied cloth to his hair which was spread for the monks and lay priests to sit as a gesture of highest honour for them. He was like king Ashoka, always ready to honour the honourables.

### The Trauma of the 9th Century

Darma, a crafty brother of Ralpachen, managed to send his monk brother to Bhutan, and the monk prime minister to spend his time on meditation.

*The Persecution of Buddhist Scholars by King Darma:* In 836 ministers Ba Gyaltore and Chogro Lhalon, the other dissident ministers of the king and supporters of Darma, broke the neck of the king and killed him. Darma now became king and Ba Gyaltore his Prime Minister. He sealed the temples of Ramoche and Tsukla-khang in Lhasa, the Samye, Oshang Do-yi Lha-Khang and many other religious centres. He harassed the monk community in many other ways.

Darma, because of his severe anti-religious actions, came to be known amongst the Buddhists as Lang Darma, i.e., Bull Darma. His atrocities became so unbearable that a monk, Lhalung Palgy, Dorje of Yerpai under disguise shot an arrow and killed him while he was reading an inscription in the Jokhang Temple. In the ensuing mele, the killer escaped. The people heaved the sigh of relief.

The successors of Darma were kings of no importance and the line of religious kings — Chosgyal — thus came to an end, rather unceremoniously. The unity of the country was, however, now at stake.

### TROUBLED TIMES: A GREAT NATION DIVIDED INTO SMALL WARRING PRINCIPALITIES

The unsettled conditions after the assassination of Lang Darma resulted in Tibet being divided into small principalities ruled by petty chiefs warring against one another. This condition prevailed for almost 400 years,

from 842 to 1254. In 1254 Drogon Chogyal Phagpa became ruler of Trikor Chuksun (Thirteen Myriarchies).

### The 10th and 11th Centuries

With Darma's crackdown on Buddhist monks, three monks — Tsang Rabsal, Yo Gyewa Jung and Mer Sakya Muni — had gathered many Buddhist texts as they could and then fled central Tibet to reach Amdo. There they were well provided by the local people. A young bright boy became Buddhist and after the first initiation he came to be called 'Gewa Rabsal'. Soon he learnt most of the Buddhist teachings. Then he came to be known as Gongpa Rabsal, i.e., 'All Wise'. His final initiation was, however, made by Tsang Rabsal.

*Restoration of Buddhism in Central Tibet:* In western Tibet, in Ngari region, Tsenpo Khore, grandson of Kyide Nyimagon, the then ruler of the region, built the Toling monastery and also became a monk. Thereupon he assumed the name 'Lama Yeshe Od', after making his younger brother Songe his successor to the throne. Lama Yeshe Od sent twenty one young men to Kashmir in India for studying Sanskrit and Buddhist doctrines. Ten young men from Ud and Tsang were sent to Amdo to receive monk ordination from the Gon'gpa-Rabsal lineage. He did many other things to promote learning. These events thus marked the rebirth or renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet.

### The 12th and 13th Centuries

*The First Foreign Invasion:* Tibet was invaded for the first time by a foreign power in 1209, by the army of Changis Khan of Mongolia. Minyag was occupied.

Thereupon a few of the adjoining chieftains made peace with the Mongols. After Changis Khan's death, in 1240, his grandson, Godan Khan, invaded and captured most part of Tibet and ruled it for thirteen years. In 1247 a wind of change occurred. Godan invited Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen to Mongolia. Godan and his community thereupon adopted Buddhism of Tibetan lineage.

*Priest-Patron Relationship:* After passing away of Godan, and also Sakya Pandita in 1251, Kublai Khan, the successor of Godan, became disciple of Drogön Chosgyal Phagpa, the young nephew of Sakya Pandita who had accompanied his uncle to Mongolia. During thirteen-year (1240-1253) Mongol rule, the rulers recorded every house in central Tibet and divided the settlement into thirteen myriarchies of ten thousand households. These were left under the control of a myriarchical chief. The houses were numbered and taxes were levied on that basis. Then a sound administrative system was developed which remained in force for many centuries. In 1253, after receiving the Vajrayana initiation from a lama Phagpa, Kublai Khan offered thirteen myriarchies of central Tibet (Khrikhor-chusum), which were under his rule at that time, as *guru dakshinā* (offering to his teacher) to Phagpa. Thus the sovereignty of Tibet was restored once again. Kublai Khan in his letter pledged that Lama Phagpa of Tibet will remain his *purohita* (Chief Priest). He and his kingdom would remain *yajamāna* (Benefactor) for Tibet. Since then Tibet and Mongolia had a very special relationship — that of the Chosyon (Purohit and Yajmana), which has been interpreted by the Western scholars as 'priest-patron relationship'. This relationship was purely on religious grounds and did not have any connotation of political relationship. The assistance given

by the Mongolians in the administration and defence of Tibet was purely a help from a *yajamāna* to his *purohita*; it was never an act of political protectorate.



Yarlung Fort, the oldest Castle in Tibet

In 1260, after the death of his brother, Monke Kublai Khan succeeded as Khagan, the Grand Mongol Emperor. He also received initiation from Lama Phagpa. Thereupon the remaining area of Tibet, comprising the complete three regions (Chol-Kha-Sum), was offered to Lama Phagpa, again as a tribute of a student to his teacher.

The united Tibet was thus placed under the rule of Lama Phagpa. The year after, i.e., in 1265, Lama Phagpa, now called as "Dgon Chogyal Phagpa" (Dharma King, The Protector of Living Beings) came back to Sakya in central Tibet to consolidate the kingdom. Since then Tibetans address the Sakya dynasty as 'Gongma' which is similar to the address used for Mongolian and Chinese kings.

Kublai Khan eventually conquered China and finally ascended the throne as Chinese Emperor in 1271. He now assumed the name of Yuan, thus starting the Yuan Dynasty in China.

The relationship between Tibet and Mongolia, however, continued to be very cordial even after the Mongols themselves became the Chinese rulers.

## *Later History of Tibet*

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**W**hen the authority of the Sakya line in Tibet was at stake, the friendly Mongols re-established it by putting down the rebellion.

At the beginning of the 14th century Lama Danyi Zangpo Pal was the Sakya ruler and he had seven wives. Zangpo Pal's sons were responsible, not unexpectedly, for creating political rivalry and schism. However, most of the powers rested with the administrator Ponchen and the other Tripoms to save the situation to a great extent.

Sakya rule, however, ended when Tibet went into the hands of Changchub Gyaltsen of Phomo Durpa in 1354.

### **From Sakya's Decline till the rise of the Dalai Lamas**

With the end of Sakya power, Changchub Gyaltsen began gaining ground. Changchub had earlier been trained in administration and religion at Sakya. In 1322 he was appointed as Governor of Nedong myriarchy. His assistant administrator was Shunu Zangpo. Finally, he revolted against Sakya and took the power. In the revolt the rulers of the Yuan dynasty in China did not intervene as it was considered an internal matter of Tibet. After taking over the power, Changchub Gyaltsen of Phomo Drupa sent an envoy to China and the latter formally recognised the government of Changchub Gyaltsen as the legitimate government of Tibet; Changchub Gyltsen himself was conferred with the title 'Tai Situ'.

Changchub was the first ruler to prepare an instruction handbook on order, security, strategy, tax collection and also steps to avoid epidemics. Changchub will always be

remembered in the history of Tibet for his most efficient and just administration.

### The 14th Century

Changchub Gyaltsen was succeeded by his monk-nephew Jamyang Sakya Gyaltsen but he did not live long. He was succeeded by Drakpa Rinchen who ruled only for eight years. The next ruler was Sonam Drakpa. Though short, his four-year rule was very prosperous for the people. When he went back to the monastery, Drakpa Gyaltsen became the ruler with Rapten Kunzang Phagpa as minister, the latter built a monastery of Palkhor Choide at Gyantze which became a great centre of learning.

*Tibetan Lamas become the Teachers of Chinese Emperor:*  
In 1407 Deshan Shakpa, the 4th incarnation of the Karmapa Lama, went to China as the spiritual teacher of the Ming emperor.

At this time the Chinese emperor also invited Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa but he declined. Instead, he sent his disciple Jamhen Choje Shakya Yeshe to China where he became Emperor Yung-lo's personal Lama.

In Tibet things took a different shape. Gongma Drakpa Gyaltsen, with 'Rinpung' as his family name, administered Rinpung and Sakya. After him dispute arose among his relations as to the succession. Consequently, the power of Phomo Drupa got reduced to marginal strength. From 1434 the Rinpung, however, begins to gain more and more power.

*Court Intrigues and Regionalism:* In the year 1505 Testen Dorje, a servant of the Rinpung family, through wily designs, got hold of 300 armours and with the aid of his trusted people consolidated his strength in Shingatse.

By and by he ran over the neighbouring regions and got appointed as minister to the Nedong rulers. The Mongols in the Koko Nor region also supported him. However, in 1516 Rinbung's power was challenged by Konchok Rinchen, who sent troops into Tsang but with the intervention of the former Gongma peace was restored.

On the demise of Tseten Dorje, his son Karma Ten Kyong Wanpo, with title 'Depa Tsangpa', succeeded at Shigatse. During the next eleven years he conquered large areas in southern Tibet besides western and northern parts of the country. He cultivated friendship with the Mongols. He was indeed a distinguished ruler as well as a learned religious personality.

# The Dalai Lamas

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The term '*Dalai*' was a title conferred upon the Lama Sonam Gyatso, the second incarnation of Gedun Dupa, by the Tumet Mongol ruler. This was the beginning of a great tradition.

## The First Dalai Lama

Gedun Dupa (1391-1474) was recognised as the first Dalai Lama after the death of Sonam Gyatso. He had attained Buddhahood in his lifetime. He was born at Shabtod in Tsang province. He took lessons from Tsongkapa, the founder of the Ge-lug-pa sect. He founded the Tashilhunpo monastery and became its first abbot. He was also known as panchen Gedun Dupa. His coming was indeed the turning point in the history of Tibet.

## The Second Dalai Lama

Gedun Gyatso (1476-1542) was born at Tanag Segme in Tsang. He was recognised as the reincarnation of Gedun Dupa. He studied in Tashi Umpo and later became the abbot of the same Monastery. He also became the chief abbot of Depung Monastery and since then he and his reincarnations, till the fifth Dalai Lama, were the residents of the Depung Monastery.

## The Third Dalai Lama

Sonam Gyatso, born at Tohlung near Lhasa, was the third Dalai Lama (1543-1588). He was recognised as the reincarnation of Gedun Gyatso. He studied at the

Depung Monastery and took his final initiation from Sonam Drakpa. He was a brilliant scholar and teacher, and also the personal *guru* of Nedong Gongma of Nedong. On the second invitation from Altan Khan, the Tumet Mongol chieftain, he visited him. He was welcomed in person at Chahar, the Mongolian outpost. Sonam Gyatso imparted Buddhist teachings to the Khan and in honour received many presents.

Altan Khan conferred on Sonam Gyatso the title '*Talai*' (in Mongolian) meaning 'the embodiment of ocean of wisdom'. *Talai* somehow became *Dalai* in English. Significantly, this title came to be inherited by his succeeding reincarnations. Altan Khan also gave Sonam Gyatso a seal inscribed with *Dorje Chang*, meaning 'Holder of the Thunderbolt'. Altan Khan received from him the title 'Religious King, *Brahmā* of land'.

Sonam Gyatso established a diplomatic office at Tongkhor, also known as Lusar, for maintaining close relationship with Dalai Lama and the Khan. He also founded the Lithang Monastery in the Kham region. Altan Khan's son and successor, Dhuring Khan, invited Sonam Gyatso and on the way the Dalai Lama built a monastery at Kumbum, where his son Tsongkhapa was born.

### The Fourth Dalai Lama and the Birth of the Institution of Panchen Lama

A child of a Mongolian tribal chief was recognized as the next Dalai Lama, the incarnation of Sonam Gyatso. He became the fourth Dalai Lama (1589-1616) with the title 'Yonten Gyatso'. He was given religious training by a Mongolian teacher. He was taught by Sangya Rinchen.

At Depung Monastery he came into contact with a scholarly Lama, Lozang Chosgyan of Tashilhunpo, and studied under him. Lozang Chosgyan was recognized as

the first Panchen Lama (meaning 'Great Scholar') and thereafter his reincarnations inherited this title.

In 1615 the Shen-tsung, Emperor of China, beseeched the Dalai Lama to bless the Buddhist temple in Nanking. Because of heavy commitment, the Dalai Lama could not go but blessed it from Tibet itself.

### The Fifth Dalai Lama

The Fifth Dalai Lama was recognised in the person of Ngwang Lozong Gyatso (1617-1682). He was ordained by the Panchen Lama in 1625. In 1638, Gushri Khan, the chief of the Qoshot Mongols, received religious instructions from the Dalai Lama who was given the title 'Tenzin Choskyi Gyalpo' (Religious King and Holder of the Buddhist faith). The Dalai Lama sent a permanent representative to Mongolia for maintaining good relations. In Tibet, however, things were difficult, there was a rivalry in the ruling circle. In the climax of rivalry between the Tsangpa Depa and Kyisod Depa, the latter sought help from Gushri Khan who first defeated the Beri chieftain in the east, since he had aligned with Tsangpa, and eventually crushed the power of Tsangpa Depa. Having conquered most part of Tibet in 1642, he requested the fifth Dalai Lama to rule the country. Thus, Tibet once again became united under a single legitimate government.

The fifth Dalai Lama was an effective ruler and good administrator besides being an excellent diplomat. He built palaces and monasteries and during his time peace prevailed in the State. The Dalai Lama also visited Peking on the repeated invitation of the Manchu Emperor of China. The emperor presented a gold plate to the Dalai Lama inscribed with the title 'Dalai Lama Dorje Chang' meaning 'Superior, the Ocean, Holder of the Thunderbolt' in Manchu, Tibetan and Chinese scripts. The emperor in

turn received a gold plate inscribed with the legend 'Namgyi Lha Jamyang Gongma Dakpo Chenpo' (The Great Master, Superior one, God of the sky, Bodhisattva). The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1653.

Three years after the demise of Panchen Lozang Chosgyan, at the age of 91 in 1662, a three year old boy was observed to be the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama and was recognized so by the Dalai Lama. He was given the name 'Lozang Yeshe' and taken to Tashilhunpo.

In his last days the Dalai Lama appointed Sangye Gyatso as Desi (regent), in 1679. In 1684 a treaty was concluded and the border between Tibet and Ladakh was agreed upon. Ladakhi ruler also agreed to send triennial presents to Tibet.

In 1682, the fifth Dalai Lama expired in the Potala. History bears it out that in his personality were combined the rare qualities of a great statesman and an outstanding scholar.

Sangye Gyatso, the Desi, is accused of concealing the demise of the fifth Dalai Lama for thirteen long years. He in fact was able to carry on the deception well. However, when the Potala Palace was completed in 1695, he unhesitatingly announced the death of the Dalai Lama.

### The Sixth Dalai Lama

The Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (1683-1707), was born at Mon Tawang. The Panchen Lama administered the initial vows. He, however, did not abide by the monastic rules. He was neither interested in the affairs of the State nor in performing the Dalai Lama's obligations. He in fact enjoyed the company of women, and also composing excellent romantic verses and songs. Understandably, he was soon deposed from his exalted position.

The government of Tibet, popularly known as 'Gaden Phodrang', had consolidated its power under the dynamic

leadership of the fifth Dalai Lama and wise administration by successive Desis, specially the Desi Sangye Gyatso. Gushri Khan remained in Tibet to assist the Dalai Lama and advise the Desi in his work of efficient governance. After the declaration of fifth Dalai Lama's death, Lhasang Khan, a descendant of Gushri Khan, somehow developed differences with Desi Sangye Gyatso. Lhasang Khan had become ambitious of himself becoming the Desi. Lhasang Khan thus disputed the authenticity of the Tsangyang Gyatso as the real reincarnation of the fifth Dalai Lama. He even installed another person, named Yeshe Gyatso, as the sixth Dalai Lama. But the monasteries and the people of Tibet did not recognise him as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. In this uncertain situation the forces of Lhasang Khan managed in 1707 to take Tsangyang Gyatso to Mongolia. It is said that on the way itself he had passed away.

Lhasang Khan ruled Tibet till 1717. But the fact of the matter is that Tibet was not under the Mongolian rule but a Mongolian person had become the head of Tibetan government. The government was in continuity of the legitimate government set up by the fifth Dalai Lama in 1642.

Another Mongolian Jungar chief, named Tse Wang Rabten, who had enmity with the tribe to which Lhasang Khan belonged, attacked Tibet and also killed Lhasang Khan in 1717. Jungar thus took the power to rule Tibet.

### The Seventh Dalai Lama

The Seventh Dalai Lama, Kalsang Gyatso (1708-1757), was born at Lithang in Kham province. The infant boy was recognised as the seventh Dalai Lama and was given protection by some Mongolian tribes and taken to Koko Nor region. He was warmly received by the Mongols. The Mongols and Manchu Emperor sent a garrison of

military for his protection and brought him to Lhasa with force. On receiving the information of the Seventh Dalai Lama coming with large military force of Manchu and Mongols, the Jungars chose to flee from Lhasa and returned to Jungar region in Mongolia. After the successful installation of Dalai Lama in Potala Palace in Lhasa a seven member committee was set up temporarily to fill up the power vaccum created by the sudden departure of Jungars. The seven member committee included two Mongolians, two Manchus and three Tibetans. This was done by the Tibetan officials after the departure of Jungars but in consultation with the leaders and military commanders who had accompanied the seventh Dalai Lama. The Mongolian troops were withdrawn immediately but the Chinese garrison remained in Lhasa in the pretext of peace-keeping. After one year, the temporary committee was dissolved and the power was handed over to the council of ministers under the seventh Dalai Lama. This council of ministers consisted of Ngapho, Lumpa and Jarawa from U, and Sonam Gyalpo and Sonam Topgyal from Tsang.

### The 18th and the 19th Centuries: Struggle for Power

Unfortunately, soon thereafter arose sharp differences among the council of ministers in Tibet. In the unsettled conditions, the provincial matter gained prime interest among the council of ministers. In the absence of Pholha, the most important minister, the other three ministers conspired and killed Sonam Gyalpo which led to a civil war in 1727 in which the leading players were Pholha on the one side and the remaining ministers on the other side. Pholha sought military support from China. China under the Manchus gladly took it as the golden chance to send its military to intervene in Tibet's internal affairs. The strong Chinese military force was placed under the

command of Jalangga and Mailu (an Amban) for effective intervention but before the Chinese reached the capital, Pholha had won the war and taken full control of Lhasa. Still, the fact remains that he did not prevent the Manchu army from reaching Lhasa in 1728. They forced Pholha to give concession and post two Manchu officials (Ambans) in Tibet with a garrison of armies in the pretext of their security and to guard Tibet from possible invasion of Jungars. These officials were supposed to act as liaison between the Tibetan rulers and the Manchu Emperor in China although in effect by promptly sending information about Tibetan affairs they helped China in controlling Tibet, albeit indirectly.

The Council of Ministers was reorganized with Pholha wielding the real power. He was an efficient administrator. He saw that the monasteries were well maintained.

Pholha established a permanent military force with 3000 armed personnel and then asked the Manchu Emperor to withdraw the Chinese garrison as the Tibetans were now capable of defending themselves from any foreign invasion. He succeeded in reducing the Chinese force to only 100 armies. But the Ambans at Lhasa continued to play mischievous role in creating divisions and mistrust among the Tibetan high officials in order to weaken the Tibetan government and make it dependent on the Chinese support and supervision. Thus, Pholha's brother Tsetan Namgyal was misled by the Ambans and it resulted in bitter fight between them. He lost faith in many of his ministers who were under the influence of the cunning Ambans. Realising all these misdeeds, he finally gave ultimatum to the Chinese to call back the remaining 100 armed forces within a specified time failing which they would have to face severe consequences. Unfortunately, due to aggressiveness and apparent arrogance he was not very popular among his own officials. At this juncture, the Ambans invited

him to their office to receive an important communication from the Manchu Emperor, and there he was treacherously killed in 1750. Immediately, a few of his trusted aids retaliated and killed both the Ambans and many other Chinese stationed along with them. The Dalai Lama rose to the occasion and restored peace and order. The senior minister Doring Pandita was then asked to carry on the administration. The Chinese Emperor thereupon sent strong military contingent.

*Stresses and Strains between the Tibetans and The Chinese—Dalai Lama emerges Supreme:* In 1747 Pholha died. His rule was, on the whole, peaceful and prosperous. He was succeeded by his younger son Gyumey Namgyal. He disliked foreign presence. Outwardly he showed that he was friendly with the Ambans, but in effect he persuaded the Chinese Emperor to reduce the strength of the Chinese garrison in Tibet. The Dalai Lama assumed more powers as the chief executive and head of the government. The Ambans were to give advice only if asked for. The temporal authority of the Dalai Lama was thus established on a permanent basis and never afterwards challenged. The Dalai Lama died in 1757 after consolidating the authority of the politico-religious institution he headed.

### The Eighth to Twelfth Dalai Lama — A Quick Succession

The Eighth Dalai Lama, Jampal Gyatso (1758-1804), was the only one who lived a comparatively long life. Unfortunately, it was during the times of this Dalai Lama that war with the Gorkhas broke out during 1788-92. But all through his life the Dalai Lama was immersed in religious matters and did not like political administration which he left conveniently in the hands of the Regents.

Before the Gorkha advance in Nepal in 1769, the Mallas were the rulers of the country. The Mallas had strong Buddhist leanings and were friendly with Tibet and carried on trade and currency transactions. The Gorkhas were by and large very aggressive. Soon border disputes and trade and monetary troubles cropped up. They sent an army in 1788 and occupied several border districts of Tibet. However, they withdrew on being promised a tribute. The Dalai Lama had no hand in this agreement. After one single instalment of tribute, the Dalai Lama stopped it. This was, however, taken to be a violation of the treaty. The second invasion by the Gorkhas reached upto Shingatse in 1792; it ravaged the Tashilhunpo Monastery.

During the first attack of the Gorkhas, the Tibetan Government sought the Chinese military support on the basis of Choyon relationship. The Chinese sent a small troop but they refused to fight against the Gorkhas and persuaded the Tibetan authorities to agree to the terms of the Gorkhas against their wishes. On the second attack, in 1792, however, the Chinese reinforced their troops and joined the Tibetan army which pushed back the Gorkhas upto Kathmandu. At that time a treaty was concluded between Nepal and Tibet in the presence of the Chinese representatives. In that treaty the Chinese very cunningly managed to force both Tibet and Nepal to accept their protectorate. Nepal was to send a mission in five years to China with gifts to the Emperor. At that moment the Chinese treatment to Nepal and Tibet was on equal footing, politically with the difference that the Tibetans had Choyon relation with the Chinese, whereas Nepal did not have such a relationship with China.

The Chinese military took advantage of their presence in Lhasa during this period and started interfering in the internal administration of Tibet. They prepared a document, the so-called 'Guidelines for the

'Administration', consisting of 29 points. In this it was tried to show that the Chinese had control over Tibet since it projected the Ambans equal to the Dalai Lama with the authority to take part in the decision-making process of Tibetan affairs. It also made certain provisions for making appointments of the high-level officials by the Chinese emperor. Obviously, it was not favoured but due to adverse circumstances prevailing at that time the Tibetans could not force its withdrawl, however it was never implemented in letter and spirit.

After the demise of the Eighth Dalai Lama in 1804 there appeared on the scene two claimants for the ninth Dalai Lamaship, one from Kham and the other from Amdo region; both the boys were two years old.

They were brought before the Regent, and the Kashag at Lhasa. They found the boy from Dan Chokhar in Kham successful in the test, and chose him to be the ninth Dalai Lama with the name 'Lungtok Gyustso' (1806-1815). When he was ten years old he took part in the annual Monlam festival and in the cold he unfortunately developed pneumonia and died.

During this time Chinese power waned and the monks from China, living in Tibet, persuaded the monks of the three important and large monasteries, Depung, Sera and Ganden, to prevail upon the government to ban the entry of foreigners into Tibet. This the government accepted and issued orders to the border district officers to prevent foreigners from coming into Tibet. This was, however, a retrograde step which isolated Tibet from the outside world affecting the progress of the country which other nations achieved. Because of this, knowledge about Tibet was denied to outsiders and *vice-versa*.

For the Tenth Dalai Lama, Tshultrem Gyatsol, two claimants appeared from U-Tsang and three from Kham. At the end, the Lithang child was chosen as he satisfied the Regent's and Kashag's tests. During this time Mongols

near Koko Nor region, under Junang Dzasa, raided and robbed the Dranag tribe Kalon Thonpa but Dapon Sarjung defeated the Mongols. Likewise the revolt of the people of Powo district, who had refused to pay taxes and follow Tibetan laws, was put down by Kanam Depa. Finally, they agreed to pay taxes and follow the laws of the country. Unfortunately, the Dalai Lama suffered ill-health throughout and died in 1837.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Dalai Lamas, Khedrup Gyatso (1838-1856) and Trinley Gyatso (1856-1875) also expired within a couple of decades after their enthronement.

### The Thirteenth Dalai Lama

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (1876-1933), was born at Dagpo Langdun and was recognised as the reincarnation of his predecessor after ascertaining the various tests and signs. He was recognised without the convention of taking out the names by the Ambans. He took the reign of temporal power at the age of sixteen, in 1895, when Tibet was politically and economically very weak and Chinese illegal interference was at the peak due to successive Dalai Lama's (Ninth to Twelfth) untimely death. The nation was virtually at the mercy of regents for ninety years. He had to face a lot of challenges at a very tender age. So much so that he had to flee to Mongolia in 1903 due to British military intervention in Tibet. On the other hand, as a result of frequent Chinese military invasion from the east, he visited Peking in 1909 to see the emperor of China with the hope of finding a peaceful solution to Sino-Tibetan Border dispute in true spirit of traditional Priest-Patron Relationship. But his meeting with the Manchu emperor went in vain and he faced a great disappointment. On his return to Lhasa he had to flee to India within a month's time due to the arrival of the Chinese military forces at Lhasa in 1910.

(British and Chinese invasion will be dealt later separately.)

He, however, returned to Lhasa in 1913 after expelling the Chinese troops, including the Ambans. He reasserted the independence of Tibet through his special proclamation and entered into a peace-treaty with Mongolia in the same year. He also sent a delegation to Simla convention to take part on equal footing with British India and China.

In his proclamation of reasserting the independence of Tibet he gave several proposals for land reforms, for social reforms and also modernisation of Tibet in terms of national security and political system. Since then he devoted himself to all round upliftment of the Tibetan people. He introduced machinery for electricity generation, postal and telegraph system and construction of roads. He issued paper currency too. Unfortunately, many other developmental projects conceived by him could not be implemented due to lack of human resources. Changing governmental structure and initiating democratisational process at that point of time were, however, not possible due to the lack of public awareness about these items of state craftsmanship. His frustration in this regard was clearly reflected in his testimonial statement issued in 1932 which later proved to be perfect prophecy of what happened afterward.

The Dalai Lama passed away in 1933. In the period of his rule from 1912 onward, till the Communist Chinese occupation, all the international legal experts and observers acknowledged that Tibet had always asserted its complete independence and sovereignty clearly and effectively.

#### DOGRA-SIKH-TIBETAN BATTLES

The Tibetans used to come to Ladakh and exchange 'brick tea' for cotton cloth and dry fruits. In 1841 when Zorawar Singh and his Sikh soldiers occupied Ladakh,

this trade was stopped. He also invaded Tibet and was able to defeat the ill-equipped Tibetans. He then proceeded upto Talakhar in Purang.

A large army of Tibetans led by Kalon Pal-lhun fought Zorawar Singh and drove the Jammu army out of Taklakhar. In this encounter Zorawar Singh was brought down from his horse and his head chopped off. The severe Tibetan winter contributed to a great extent to their victory. Tibetans reached almost upto Leh. A treaty was then entered into not to violate each other's borders.

#### SECOND GORKHA-TIBETAN WAR

After the death of the eleventh Dalai Lama, the Gorkhas invaded Tibet for a second time and occupied the districts of Nyanang, Rongshar, Dzongka and Purang. Tibetans could not retrieve these territories. In 1856 an agreement was made and Tibet agreed to pay 10,000 Nepalese Rupees to Nepal annually and not to collect taxes from Gorkha traders and merchants. They also released Gorkha prisoners of war and their weapons. In return, the Gorkhas gave back all the occupied districts.

## The British in Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim

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Tibet desired to remain independent and neutral and did not like any interference or incursion into their territory by any foreigner. In 1885, the Tibetan government came to know from the Amban that the Manchu emperor of China had permitted an expedition by the British between China and India *via* Tibet. A meeting of Tibetan officials declared that they were troubled by the British from all sides and the Chinese Emperor had no authority to grant permission to the British to go through Tibet. The Tsongdu or National Assembly members vowed not to allow any Britisher inside Tibet and affixed their seals to it. A checkpost was set up at Lungthur, inside Tibetan territory, near the Sikkimese border, and was manned by an officer with 20 soldiers. In 1888, Britishers asked the Dalai Lama to remove the check-post which they described as a fortress, otherwise they would attack and drive the Tibetans out from that position. Two Tibetan generals, Dapon Ngabo and Dapon Surkhang with 900 soliders, were despatched under the command of minister Kalon Lhalu. The local officer marched with his troops along the border. In 1888 the Tibetans and the Britishers got engaged in a fierce battle. The Tibetans were, however, routed by the superior gun power of the Britishers. The British forcibly and unjustifiably entered Bhutan also and compelled the ruler to take refuge in Tibet.

*The Times of Uncertainty:* In 1890 a sort of treaty was made between Lord Lansdowne, Governor-General in India, and the Manchu Amban but without the knowledge of Tibetan government. By this treaty the border

between Tibet and Sikkim was established; Sikkim became a British protectorate with complete control over internal administration and foreign relations. However, nothing was said about China's suzerainty over Tibet. In 1893 an article was added to the Convention by which trade across Sikkim and Tibet was discussed with the Chinese but could not be enforced. So the British decided to establish direct contact with Tibet.

#### RENEWED BRITISH EXPEDITION INTO TIBET AND ITS AFTERMATH: THE GREAT BETRAYAL

Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, saw that any peaceful overture to Tibet would be futile, hence he decided to send a mission under the leadership of Col. Francis Younghusband. In July 1903 the Tibetans came to know of Younghusband and his soldiers coming to Tibet via Khamba Dzang for negotiating trade and British relations with Tibetan government. Lozang Trinley and Tsarong were directed to talk to Younghusband on the border itself and not inside Tibet. Two district officers with troops were sent to Giagong to prevent the British from proceeding to Khamba Dzang. But the superior military power of the British prevailed. The Tibetans could not stop them from reaching Khamba Dzang and camp there. Tibetan officials and Ambans also came to discuss but when the Tibetans insisted that Chinese had no say in their trade matters, the Ambans went back. However, no progress was made. After three months of stay, the British in 1903 withdrew to Sikkim.

#### The 20th Century

Again in 1903 the intention of the British to march into Tibet was conveyed and request made for responsible officials to be sent for talks. But no effective negotiation took place. The Tibetans could also not stop the British

from coming into Tibet. On March 31, 1904 while the Tibetan commanders were talking to Younghusband, the British troops which had surrounded the small Tibetan army at Guru opened fire. The Tibetans were simply taken aback, hence got defeated. Later, they captured Gyantse fort also. The Manchu Ambans came to Gyantse but Younghusband preferred to deal with Dalai Lama himself. However, on being advised, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa for the north. Younghusband reached Lhasa and only the Regent came to negotiate with him.

*British Demand for Exclusive Commercial Rights and Political Hegemony in Tibet:* In September 1904 a Convention was signed in the audience hall of the Potala Palace in the presence of an Amban and a Nepalese representative to Tibet as witnesses. Accordingly, Sikkim-Tibet border was settled and trade facilities at Gyantse, Garthar and Yatung were granted to the British; also further areas remained open for fresh commercial negotiations. Other foreign powers were not to have any political connection with Tibet.

*British Surrender to China:* By the 1906 Anglo-Chinese Convention, the British granted some concession with the aim of "preserving Chinese suzerainty" over Tibet. It was absolutely uncalled for. By this action of theirs, Tibet's position in the world-polity got considerably weakened.

*Anglo-Russian Convention Stabbed Tibet in the Back:* By the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, the British made a reference recognizing the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. They also agreed not to negotiate with Tibet or post a representative at Lhasa without consulting China. Later the Tibetans maintained that they knew nothing of these conventions and rightly so. But then the damage was already done; the British action was nothing short of stabbing Tibet on its back.

### CHINESE INVASION OF TIBET AND BRITISH POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

The Dalai Lama returned in 1909 but his attitude towards China did not change. Chao Erh-feng wanted to convert Tibet into a province of China. The Dalai Lama appealed for British help against the Chinese but without any positive result. On the other hand, the Dalai Lama was told by the Chinese that the troops were being sent to patrol the trade-routes only. The Ambans also spread the same rumour. The Chinese reached Lhasa in 1910 and the Dalai Lama was left with no option but to flee to Chaksam. This changed the relations between China and Tibet. By and large, this expedition was a failure. The Dalai Lama and his ministers were in exile and the Panchen Lama refused to take charge of the administration. The Dalai Lama also refused to return from exile and wanted guarantee from the British with regard to any settlement between China and Tibet. He maintained that China was not Tibet's overlord.

*Tibet Reasserts its Freedom:* The Chinese troops in Lhasa could not get any reinforcement from the mainland because of the downfall of the Manchu emperor. Consequently, the Chinese troops, including the Ambans, had to withdraw from Tibet under a treaty. All the arms and properties of the Ambans were handed over to the Tibetan Government. In 1913 the Dalai Lama entered Lhasa after the last Chinese soldier had left Lhasa. The independence of Tibet was thus fully recognised by China.

*Political Turmoil in China and Tibetan Response:* The Republican Government of Yuan-shih-Kai (Chiang-Kai-Shek) expelled the Manchus. Yuan declared himself as the President. But he also stated that Tibet, Mongolia and Sinkiang were provinces of the Chinese Republic which was absolutely incorrect.

*Russian Influence in Mongolia:* The Tibetans took fresh measures to establish their independence. They sent reinforcement to eastern parts. At this juncture the Russians established their influence over Mongolia.

#### PEACE TREATY WITH MONGOLIA

In 1913 Tibet and Mongolia signed a Treaty of Peace recognising each others' sovereignty. It was necessitated because both these countries faced misbehaviour of the Manchu emperor towards their governments and threats to their independence.

#### ANGLO-SINO-TIBETAN SIMLA CONFERENCE OF 1913-1914: ITS EFFECTS

The Chinese were upset by the Russian influence in Mongolia and they were willing to discuss Tibet-China problem. A tripartite conference with China, Tibet and British-India took place in Simla in 1913. Henry McMohan, Ivan Chen, Lonchen Palfor, Dorje Shatra represented British, Chinese and Tibetan interests, respectively. Negotiations went on for several months and a draft agreement was prepared. But the Chinese refused to sign it. So the British entered into a direct agreement with Tibet in 1914. This was, however, a significant step though not helpful enough *vis-a-vis* China and the total independence of Tibet. The main clauses of the Convention were as follows:

Britain and China would recognize that Tibet was under the suzerainty of China; China recognized the autonomy of outer Tibet and would not interfere in the administration of that area, or in the installation of the Dalai Lama; China would not make Tibet its province; Britain will not annex Tibet; an Amban with 300 men for escort was to be stationed at Lhasa, and all Chinese

troops were to be withdrawn from Tibet. Further, China and Britain will not enter into any talks with any foreign power regarding Tibet. This treaty was ratified by Britain and Tibet and until China ratified, which it never did, portions favouring or affecting China would not be recognised or implemented.

*British Presence in Tibet with Limited Vision:* Now British troops were present in Gyantse to protect trade marts. Tibetans were also given military training in arms and ammunition by the British. The Tibetan army was modelled on British military system. However, Tibet was denied European technologies. Hence Tibetan 'armed forces' lost opportunity to modernise itself and become powerful enough to defend the country against all internal and external threats.

#### CHINA AND THE BRITISH: NEW DIMENSION TO POWER STRUGGLE IN TIBET

In the second decade of the 20th century Tibet recaptured some areas in the Kham region and forced the Chinese in Chamdo to surrender. With British help in the military training, the Dalai Lama became somewhat strong. Now China began to interfere in Tibetan affairs and the Dalai Lama insisted on China recognising Tibet's independence. The stoppage of exchange of gifts between Dalai Lama and President of China put an end to the idea of priest-patron relationship which existed before. Religion was no longer a binding force. National self-interest, political and economic, as well as territorial expansion, became the motive-force in international relations. The world had changed considerably but the Tibetan response to that was hardly adequate.

In 1931 the Dargyas Monastery was attacked and the Tibetans were pushed eastwards into Chinese area as far

as Tachienlu. The Chinese commander, however, annexed all the territory here to the Szechwan province. The Dalai Lama and the President concluded a truce but it was violated by the Chinese army. A sort of peace was restored with the intervention of the British but it was an uneasy peace.

*Tibet's Fresh Problems:* In 1933 the Dalai Lama expired and Tibet came under the rule of a Regent. Lungshar became the head of the National Assembly and the young Lama of Rating monastery, Jampal Yesne, was appointed Regent. Lungshar wanted to become head of Tibetan Republic and the monks became aware of his game. He was arrested, blinded and put in prison for life.

Events started moving very fast. In 1941, the Regent abdicated. Lama Tagdak became the Regent. Huang-Mu-Sang was sent to Lhasa to assess whether the time was ripe to assert the Chinese overlordship. He found that the Tibetans were totally against this move and, therefore, the Chinese armed attack on Tibet never took place. The British Government appointed their representative in Lhasa to checkmate, if need be, the officers of China left behind by Huang. This became the Indian Mission in Tibet after India attained independence in 1947.

#### NEUTRALITY

During 1940-46, inspite of heavy diplomatic pressure from America, Britain and China, Tibet did not agree to give surface route through its territory for transportation of weapons of war and equipments from British India to China. All the three countries had to adhere to this arrangement. Tibet's neutrality from the time of the Second World War was thus officially acknowledged internationally.

## Tibet in World Politics

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### The Fourteenth Dalai Lama: The Present Head of the Tibetan Nation

The candidature of the Tektser child proved to be the real incarnation of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and he was installed as the fourteenth and reigning Dalai Lama, in 1940. He was named Tenzin Gyatso. Tagdak Rimpoche, the senior tutor of the Dalai Lama, became the Regent. During the Second World War, Tibet remained completely neutral. But circumstances made it clear that the Tibetans should learn English. Some students were sent to India for this purpose. Soon Tibetan delegates took part in Asian Relations Conference in Delhi in 1947, where the national flag of Tibet was hoisted and speeches made by Tibetan representatives.

*India Recognises Independent Status of Tibet:* After the Asian Conference, India recognised Tibet's independence in 1948, and passports of Tibetan Delegation were honoured by France, Italy, the United Kingdom, USA and all the countries the delegation visited.

*China Becomes Red and Invades Tibet and India:* In 1949 Chiang Kai-Shek's government fell to Chinese communists headed by Mao Tse-tung. In 1950 Chinese communist government marched into Tibet near Chamdo and at the same time on the Indian territory of Aksai Chin, crossing Kuen-Lun mountains. They captured some parts of north-west Tibet. Khampa volunteers and the Tibetan army opposed the Chinese army but could not hold for long. Indian protest to China elicited the

reply that Tibet was an integral part of China and India should not interfere in its internal matter.

*UNO and Tibet—A Disappointing Experience:* Now Tibet took the matter of Chinese violation of its territory to the United Nations which was not discussed but postponed. Tibet was not a member of the UNO. The British attitude was very much disappointing and against the clauses of the Simla Convention which the British themselves had drafted for they asserted that Tibet's legal position was not clear. On the advice of the Indian government, the Dalai Lama corresponded with Communist China for friendly relations and asked for the return of prisoners of war and vacation of occupied Tibetan areas.

*The Worst Days:* Request for a fact-finding committee sent to Tibet was infructuous. The National Assembly advised Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa in case the Chinese occupied it. Dalai Lama appointed two Prime Ministers, Losang Tashi and Lukhangwa, to administer the country in his absence. He then went to Yatung on the southern Tibetan frontier enroute to India. He also deposited some part of his treasure in Sikkim in case he needed it in his exile. The Ngabo delegation to China for negotiating peace failed, instead they were asked to sign a 17 point statement which they refused. But the Chinese forged their seals. The Statement was full of falsehood; ultimately the Chinese occupied Lhasa. When the Dalai Lama found that the Tibetans could not fight the Chinese, he asked the Prime Ministers to resign in 1952.

*India Talks of Peaceful Coexistence but China Captures Tibet:* In 1954 India and China entered into trade agreement. Soon Jawaharlal Nehru came out with the concept of *Panchasheel* or Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, meant particularly for the Asian countries. Still, Tibet

was divided into three administrative units by the Chinese. Religious control was reduced to the minimum. Tibetans were forcibly used in the construction of roads, etc. for military use. Tibet had by now lost its independence to the Red Chinese dragon.

*Dalai Lama's Missions to China to secure Freedom for Tibet Failed:* On an invitation, the Dalai Lama visited China in 1954 and stayed there for six months. Panchen Lama, Choskyi Gyaltsen, also joined him.

In China, the Chinese maintained that Tibet was part of it. In a meeting with Mao the Dalai Lama was told that the Chairman had decided to administer Tibet through a Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet and also asked Dalai Lama his opinion, who diplomatically replied that as the proposal was of far-reaching implications he would like to consult the Panchen Lama and others before reaching any conclusion. In 1955 he returned to Lhasa. He also attended the Preparatory Committee headed by Marshal Chen Yi in April 1956. Of the 47 members, 20 were Chinese nominees. No policy-matter was discussed. Situation in Tibet became worse. Many were arrested and many others were not allowed to leave Lhasa. At night many Tibetans escaped to the mountains and joined the Khampa guerillas against the Chinese. The Dalai Lama was helpless. He now understood fully well that the Chinese would not be able to drive out the guerillas fired with intense nationalist feelings but then his men also would not succeed in retaining their rule in the country.

*One More Effort:* In 1956 the Mahabodhi Society in India invited him to attend the 2500 Mahaparinirvana ceremony of the Buddha. He visited India with Panchen Lama. At that time the Dalai Lama thought of taking political assylum in India. But on the advice of Nehru he

returned to Tibet after the function. He also put forth a four point programme to Chou-en-Lai:

(i) Chinese troops to be withdrawn; (ii) reinstatement of dimissed Prime Ministers; (iii) Restoration of Tibet's political status as it stood at the time of the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama; and (iv) to put a stop to Communist propaganda for the so-called reforms in Tibet.

*Chinese Treachery:* Chou assured him that the Chairman has promised that no reforms would be made without Tibetan consent. But the fact was different. The Communist regime was oppressive, more and more people joined the guerilla force; punishments were cruel, people were executed. Besides, monasteries were dissipated and religion was decried. The Khampas on their part cut the roads, demolished bridges and raided warehouses. Chinese repression was savage. Even now at this critical moment the Dalai Lama wanted a non-violent settlement and sent some monks and laymen to the Khampas to persuade them not to use arms. But the Chinese demanded that the Tibetan army fight these guerillas. The Kashag rejected. Rebellion broke out and the Chinese had to fight by themselves. Lukhangwa, the Prime Minister, and two of Dalai Lama's brothers were deprived of their nationality. There was unprecedented uprising.

*Dalai Lama Forced to Quit and his Palace Attacked by Mortars:* In 1958 Dalai Lama was invited to attend the National Assembly in China but he rejected the invitation. In 1959 he had to face the determination of the Chinese to occupy the whole of Tibet, even at the cost of forcibly taking away the Dalai Lama. The people assembled around Norbulingka and shouted that the Dalai Lama should not accept the invitation of the Chinese Gen. T'an Kuan-san. Dalai Lama assured that he would not,

but sent letters of acknowledgement of the invitation to the General to gain time. The general made it clear that there was no way for any understanding and amassed military hardware for attacking the Potala Palace from the north gate. Now the Dalai Lama clearly saw that there was no alternative left but leave Lhasa.

#### CHINA'S SAVAGE CRACKDOWN ON TIBET AND DALAI LAMA LEAVES FOR INDIA

At ten in the night of the 18th March, 1959, Dalai Lama with closest relations and colleagues as well as a battalion of Tibetan soldiers left the Potala Palace on his way to India. Hundreds of Khampas guarded the route bidding silent farewell to their most revered leader with tearful eyes. Around the same time the Chinese bombarded the Palace without knowing that the bird had flown its cage.

The Dalai Lama crossed into India near Mangmany, the last Tibetan village, and was inside Indian border in early April. He arrived at Bomdilla on the 12th April from where he was driven in a jeep. He reached Tezpur on April 18. The Indian Government arranged a special train from Tezpur to Mussoorie. After a year's stay at Mussoorie he came over to Dharmasala which he made his permanent residence while in exile and from where he runs the Tibetan Government in exile.

## Sum-Up

The History of Tibet goes back to the Stone Age, like the history of many other countries of the world. There is ample archaeological evidence to show that at a number of places people lived in this country from almost one hundred thousand years from now. However, there is a traditional history also which narrates a number of legends throwing light on the beginning of civilization in Tibet. Similarly, there are many mythological stories giving us similar other details about the early history of Tibet.

During the historical period, however, Tibet played a very vital role in the fields of religion, philosophy, literature, art and architecture. There have been a number of distinguished rulers who gave Tibet a distinct personality. Some of them even crossed the natural boundaries of Tibet and conquered many places in the north, south and west at different points of time. However, many significant changes emerged from the 17th century when the institution of Dalai Lama was introduced in the social, cultural, religious and political life of the country.

At the operational level, Tibet's interaction-area was largely confined to south-western China, Inner Asia, including Eastern Turkestan, and Mongolia, each of which was largely insular between the 15th and 19th centuries. On the other hand, Europe was fast changing on the formidable front of science and technology, leading to what is often called 'Industrial Revolution'. Tibet, Central Asia, Inner Asia, Mongolia, and to a great extent even China, lagged behind in this great process of

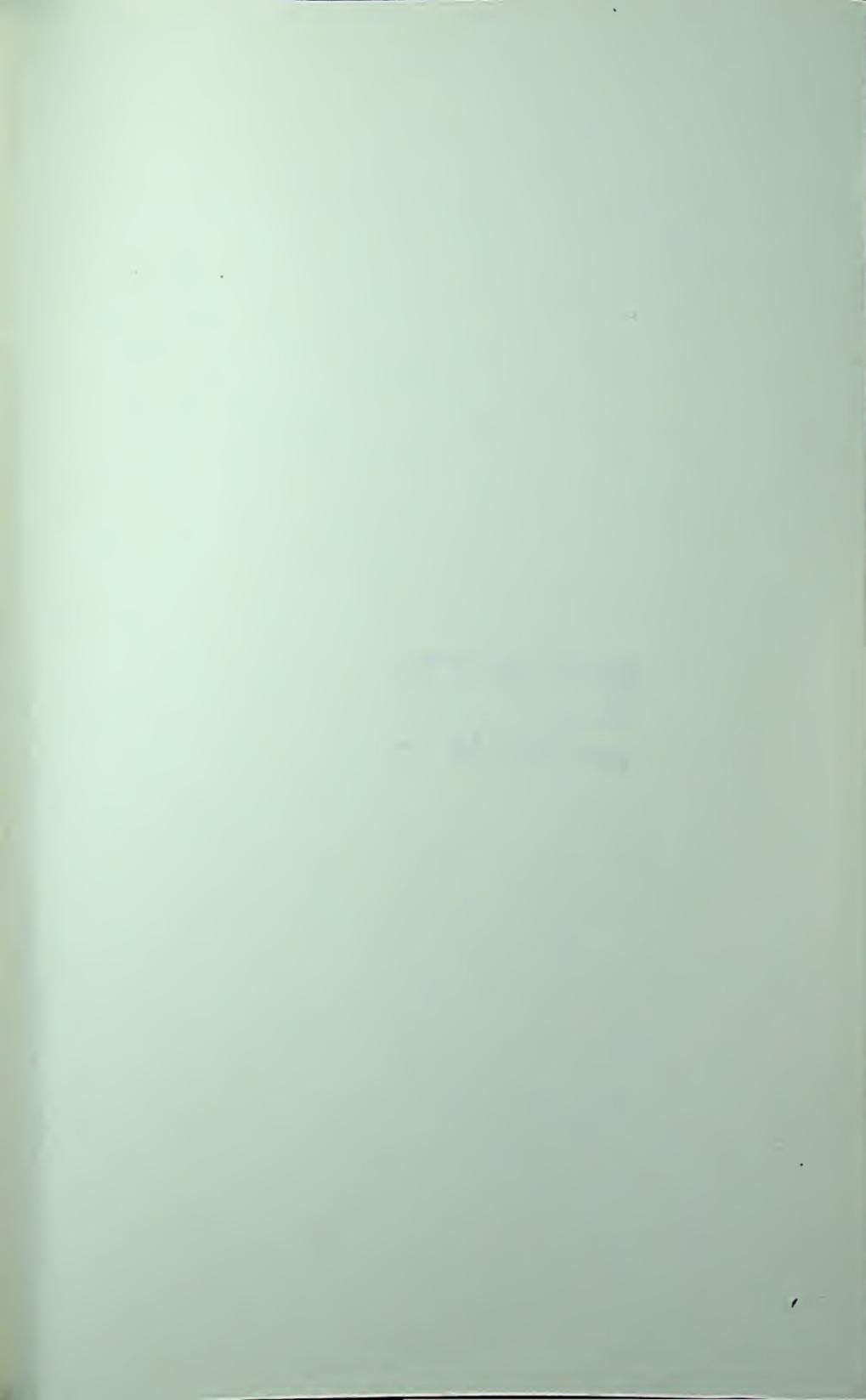
change in human history. Even the two World Wars did not affect Tibet in any manner. The comparative isolation of Tibet, therefore, left the country out of the League of Nations, United Nations Organisation, and all other international associations—neither Tibet applied for their membership nor the world paid any attention to her. The outside world thought that dealing with China was good enough; its interests in Tibet were, albeit indirectly, safe. It was nonetheless an entirely wrong and lopsided perception for which Tibet as well as the non-Chinese world, including India, had to suffer so much, and the suffering is continuing.

Tibet's comparative isolation from the cross-currents of world politics was, however, not accidental. It was the product of the Buddhist perception of Peaceful Coexistence which Pandit Nehru shared through "Panchsheel" but unfortunately not his counterpart in China as the recent history of India and Tibet bears out quite clearly. Tibet's decision to remain neutral and to remain self-content was, therefore, part of her traditional policy. What was perhaps little realised is the fact that even neutrality is to be guarded with arms. And what was also perhaps ignored was the fact that neutrality is not to be confused with isolation.

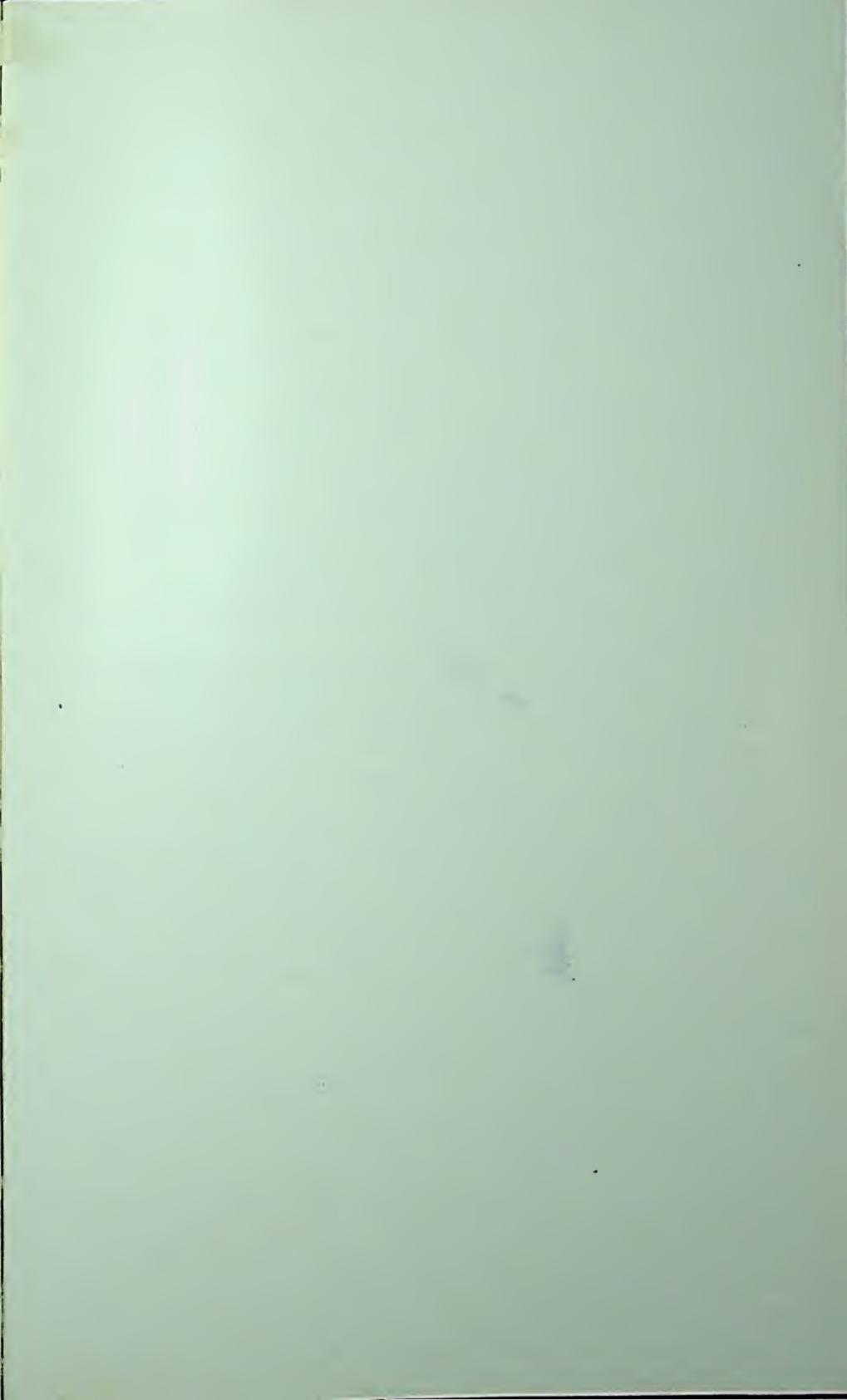
This small book on the history of Tibet aims at constantly reminding the Tibetan people about their glorious past when they had repeatedly defeated the Chinese, the people of Eastern Turkestan, the people living round Samarkand in Uzbekistan, and also threatened Nepal and India. In the Sinkiang province of Eastern Turkestan, the Tibetans ruled directly and for decades. On the religious front the Dalai Lama was venerated like the Pope of the Vatican, his words were the last words for the Buddhists practically all over Asia.

This book is an effort to show that the position of eminence of Tibet amongst the Asian nations could not be retained in the 20th century because it could not meet effectively the new challenges of the mid-20th century, both social and political. The causes of weakness lie squarely on the shoulders of political fragmentation of the country and disunity of its people as much as on the lack of proper vision of the future. The doors and the windows of the nation did not open wide enough to the outside world. The mobility of the people to the East and the West for bringing in new political ideas and new industrial and scientific technologies and knowledge, respectively, was extremely restricted.

It is hoped that the Tibetan people will get inspiration as well as learn lesson from their past to build a great future for themselves.



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(संग्रहालय काशी)  
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